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INTELLIGENCE

One of the key appointments of President-elect Kennedy was that of Allen W. Dulles to continue in office as head of the super-secret Central Intelligence Agency. This particular appointment, like that of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, was made in the face of continuing criticism of many of the agency's apparent policies and methods of operation — only "apparent" because of the excessive secrecy surrounding its activities, another source of much criticism.

The criticism of CIA under Dulles has been centered on what the agency has been up to in the way of cloak-and-dagger melodramatics, which, when bungled, as they have been on a number of occasions, have made the U. S. look something like a bull in the china shop of world affairs, the U-2 episode being the worst example. But in reflecting on the function and purposes of a government institution like the CIA, we have begun to wonder whether what the agency has not been doing isn't even more of a threat to a sane foreign policy than what it has been doing.

Charged with providing information relative to the nation's security needs, an intelligence outfit is required to concern itself with all the military capabilities of any potential enemy or adversary. But such capabilities comprise only half the kind of information needed. The other half has to do with other countries' intentions regarding their military capabilities.

It is not enough for accurate evaluation for the CIA to furnish evidence that Britain and France have been developing a strong nuclear warfare potential. It must also provide factual material on the possible uses to which such a potential might be put. Has the CIA been active in gathering such information about other parts of the world?

For some time more and more responsible Americans have been traveling to Russia and reporting back on strong peace and disarmament sentiment there, even at the official level. Yesterday, for example, we reprinted such a report on the opposite page by Professor Louis Sohn of Harvard, who attended the Moscow meeting of the "Pugwash" scientists in December. Has the CIA made analyses of this peace sentiment in the Soviet Union, of the nature of the Kremlin-Peking dispute which has apparently ended, for the time being, in a victory for the disarmament-centered, war-is-not-inevitable doctrine of Premier Khrushchev?

With such objective and dispassionate intelligence the CIA would be serving what is supposed to be a strictly information-gathering function. But if it sees its function as conducting political warfare against Communism, as it has seemed to see it under Dulles's leadership, it is not likely to concern itself with such information.

In the end, however, this is a policy

decision, which means it is a matter of the basic directive to the agency from on high. A directive to provide all possible intelligence including whatever peaceful intentions there might be in the Communist world was, perhaps, not apt to have been given under the retiring administration. But if the President-elect seriously desires to give a whole new look to the disarmament question, this will doubtless require a new set of directives to Mr. Dulles and his CIA, so that they not only refrain from openly provocative actions but also from exclusively negative, scarifying intelligence.

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